

From: Larry Steinbecker
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern:

I would like to take this opportunity to speak forcefully in favor of Microsoft regarding the DOJ's legal actions against them.

Unlike the monopoly previously held by AT & T, and currently held by the U.S. Post Office, Microsoft did not gain their dominant position by outlawing competitors; they outperformed them, thus **earning** a dominant position.

I speak directly from experience as the owner of a computer software firm when I say that Microsoft has done this country a great service in delivering a single dominant operating system. Since my company only has to write software for a single environment, it is able to deliver higher quality products and offer lower prices than if it had to write software for numerous, incompatible environments. Our 2,000+ customers are the direct beneficiaries of this fact to the tune of tens if not hundreds of thousands of dollars. This same fact holds true for every producer of software that runs on Microsoft platforms, multiplied by each of their respective customer bases.

Further, every one of Microsoft's customers, by having free access to a web browser, was measurably and positively impacted by the fact they did not have to spend an additional \$30 - \$100 in order to browse the web. True, Netscape was hurt by this action, but the benefit to the country as a whole was immense. Every Microsoft customer saved \$30 to \$100 by not having to purchase a separate browser. Each of these millions of users were then able to save that money, or use it to purchase other goods or services that they would not have otherwise bought.

Remarkably, Microsoft has been painted as the "bad guy" for making business more difficult for their competitors. Never mind the fact that every action taken by every business in every field is done precisely to benefit their own company at the expense of their competitors. Every advertisement, feature, and service provided by a company negatively affects their competitors' ability to compete with them. And yet we are to believe that Microsoft is evil and conniving for not wishing to bestow bounty upon its competitors, nor make life easy for them.

The DOJ's actions thus far have further cost the economy untold billions. It is not a coincidence that the stock market plunge began precisely on the day that the judgment was announced against Microsoft. Since that time, the stock market has lost nearly \$1 trillion in value as investors became worried that the tech sector, our most productive market segment, was going

to come under persecution and micromanagement by U.S. Government. The DOJ's actions have not just eviscerated Microsoft's value, but the retirement and savings accounts of countless citizens who gladly owned Microsoft and other tech stocks.

It should be obvious to anyone of even limited intellectual resources that Microsoft, while having a dominant position, can only do so if they continue to outperform their competitors. Microsoft has stumbled in particular areas, such as personal finance software, on-line services and even server operating systems. In every case the market has gone to their competitors (Quicken, American On-Line and Linux) quickly, efficiently, and without government intervention. This same migration will happen if Microsoft ceases to offer the best operating system at the best price.

Microsoft's envious competitors are largely driving this case. They are seeking to gain in court that which they could not achieve in the marketplace. But it is time for the DOJ to stop acting as the special-interest arm of the government for these competitors; instead the DOJ should act in the interest of the countless citizens benefited directly and indirectly by use of Microsoft's products and ownership of Microsoft's stock. I strongly urge you to settle this case with the least possible damage to Microsoft, and to let America's most productive company alone in the future, to benefit of our country.

Sincerely,

Larry Steinbecker